

# Paragraph response to Informational Text

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A response to “School Cancels Graduation for Cheaters,” *Associated Press* June 5, 2009



## **5 MINUTES—reflection on the ideas**

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What might be some further implications from the article “School Cancels Graduation for Cheaters.”

What is the author’s purpose or concern? Jot down any and all thoughts for five minutes.

# My Reflection Notes from the article...

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- School honor and reputation at stake
- Reminds me of Scent of a Woman at the end when he is supposed to “snitch” on his classmates.
- Small high school of only 400 students with only 60 kids graduating
- Graduation rate is 99%
- Graduation rate is higher than average
- One student cheated and still failed
- School does not have parent support
- Community does not support school decision
- One student accessed the teachers' computers
- One student informed the principal



## BOX 1 (evidence)

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Write a quote or paraphrase found in the article that **best captures your response to the prompt or an important detail**. If it is word-for-word, remember to put quotation marks around it with a page number in parenthesis.



## Box 1 Example:

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**“Centerburg High...is one of the state’s top schools, with an ‘excellent’ academic rating last year, according to the state Department of Education” (88).**



## BOX 2 (Warrant)

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After the quote, write in your own words the **significance** or **importance** of the quote. What does it show the reader? How is it an important detail or idea? This is where you follow the quote with an answer to “so what?” What does it mean?



## BOX 2 EXAMPLE:

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“Centerburg High...is one of the state’s top schools, with an ‘excellent’ academic rating last year, according to the state Department of Education” (School Cancels Graduation 88).

**This surely is a point of pride for the school district and community, but it begs the question of whether it is wholly deserved in light of the cheating scandal.**



## BOX 3 (Transition)

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What is the **context** or larger conversation to which you are responding? Is there anything the reader must know before you jump in with the details and explanation? You need to transition or introduce the evidence. What is it you want the reader to see? If this were a trial, the prosecutor always contextualizes the “weapon” before showing the jury. You, the writer, must do the same for your reader.





## BOX 3 (Transition)

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Scroll up to Box 3 and consider introducing in one of the following ways:

- ❑ Introduce the **purpose** of the evidence.
- ❑ Introduce the **speaker** or author to show credibility.
- ❑ Introduce **what** you want the reader to see with this evidence.



## STEP 3 Example:

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**When school officials uncovered large-scale cheating in their district, they responded by canceling graduation ceremonies.** “Centerburg High...is one of the state’s top schools, with an ‘excellent’ academic rating last year, according to the state Department of Education” (School Cancels Graduation 88). This surely is a point of pride for the school district and community, but it begs the question of whether it is wholly deserved in light of the cheating scandal.



## BOX 4 (Evidence and Backing)

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Is there another line in the reading that says something similar to the first quote? If so, put this **quote or paraphrase** at the end of all the writing you have done so far.

**OR**

Is there another line in the reading that further shows the point of the first line?



## BOX 4 Example:

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When school officials uncovered large-scale cheating in their district, they responded by canceling graduation ceremonies. “Centerburg High...is one of the state’s top schools, with an ‘excellent’ academic rating last year, according to the state Department of Education” (School Cancels Graduation 88). This surely is a point of pride for the school district and community, but it begs the question of whether it is wholly deserved in light of the cheating scandal. **Superintendent Dorothy Holden supported the decision to cancel graduation by saying, “...you cheated, you lied, you denied” (88).**



## BOX 5 (Transition)

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You need to transition to introduce your second piece of evidence. This piece of evidence must tie in with the first piece of evidence as well as make sense with the big idea.



## BOX 5 Example:

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When school officials uncovered large-scale cheating in their district, they responded by canceling graduation ceremonies. “Centerburg High...is one of the state’s top schools, with an ‘excellent’ academic rating last year, according to the state Department of Education” (School Cancels Graduation 88). This surely is a point of pride for the school district and community, but it begs the question of whether it is wholly deserved in light of the cheating scandal. **School officials who have lauded the achievement of a higher than average graduation rate at 99% (88) must now take action or risk losing the confidence of their community and peers.** Superintendent Dorothy Holden supported the decision to cancel graduation by saying, “...you cheated, you lied, you denied” (88).



## BOX 6 (Warranting and Backing)

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After the second quote or example, write a short explanation of **HOW** it relates to the first quote and **WHY** it is significant.

## BOX 6 Example:

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When school officials uncovered large-scale cheating in their district, they responded by canceling graduation ceremonies. “Centerburg High...is one of the state’s top schools, with an ‘excellent’ academic rating last year, according to the state Department of Education” (School Cancels Graduation 88). This surely is a point of pride for the school district and community, but it begs the question of whether it is wholly deserved in light of the cheating scandal. School officials who have lauded the achievement of a higher than average graduation rate at 99% (88) must now take action or risk losing the confidence of their community and peers. Superintendent Dorothy Holden supported the decision to cancel graduation by saying, “...you cheated, you lied, you denied” (88). **Her response to “deny graduation” is interesting in light of the fact that the school district has not denied students their diploma---only the graduation ceremony. If the students truly earned the diploma, then they are the ones cheated out of the ceremony that accompanies it. Worse yet, if the school believes the students cheated their way to the diploma, shame on them for awarding one.**





## BOX 7 (Topic Sentence)

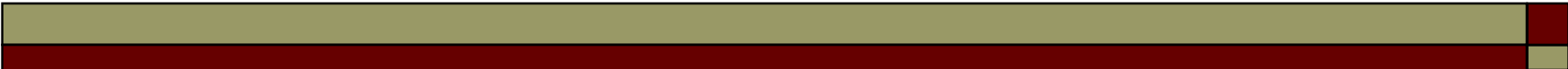
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- ❑ Read through your paragraph so far....Think about the main idea. Do you see a general theme or idea in your message?
- ❑ Write one or two sentences that grab the general idea of the paragraph. Your sentence should be large enough to cover both quotes and ideas, but small enough for your audience to have a good idea about the paragraph. This paragraph **MUST** support your thesis from the introduction.

# BOX 7 Example:

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**In cases of student misconduct, it is always important to consider punishment appropriate and fitting to the crime. Yet, an Ohio school district over-reaches their authority in an attempt to command control of an embarrassing and publicly damaging situation.** When school officials uncovered large-scale cheating in their district, they responded by canceling graduation ceremonies. “Centerburg High...is one of the state’s top schools, with an ‘excellent’ academic rating last year, according to the state Department of Education” (School Cancels Graduation 88). This surely is a point of pride for the school district and community, but it begs the question of whether it is wholly deserved in light of the cheating scandal. School officials who have lauded the achievement of a higher than average graduation rate at 99% (88) must now take action or risk losing the confidence of their community and peers. Superintendent Dorothy Holden supported the decision to cancel graduation by saying, “...you cheated, you lied, you denied” (88). Her response to “deny graduation” is interesting in light of the fact that the school district has not denied students their diploma---only the graduation ceremony. If the students truly earned the diploma, then they are the ones cheated out of the ceremony that accompanies it. Worse yet, if the school believes the students cheated their way to the diploma, shame on them for awarding one.



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Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter In Persuasion*.  
N.p.: Norton, W. W. & Company, Inc, 2005.  
Print.